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Dear Josh,

Thank you for your very thoughtful letter. Let me first make clear that I have not encouraged Sarkar in his project. I discovered that he was well advanced in this project but without certainty of a job, and I figured you could advise him more effectively than I.

As for the substance of his work, I had missed the point of the unreliability and thought, probably in a medical rather than public health way, that an immunological approach would be one that could be tested and chosen individually, in competition, say, with vasectomy.

As for the matter of state-imposed programs, I would certainly share your misgivings, but I hardly see how immunology can be as bad as a sterilizing chemical added to drinking water. I agree that a 95% valid system may be more useful to a state program, but how is it going to be "imposed"? Who would force people to get a series of immunizing injections? Do you think of the possibility of sneaking sperm vaccine into, say, diphtheria shots?

I agree with the trend of your reservations, but I see less danger in immunology than in chemistry of fertility. I have given it less thought than you have, however, and may be wrong.

My alarm at genetic engineering has always been at the possibility of misuses of the technology for other purposes (atom bomb vs. atomic energy; virus weapon vs. corn-borer virus; even genetic monsters vs. repaired genes) and have been directed at the political sources of abuse rather than at the scientific sources of technology. There is no way of stopping anti-sperm immunology, and the most useful thing is to do what you did in your letter, warn of the possible uses and misuses.

It is always nice to hear from you. Regards to Margaret (?) also from Zella.

Yours,



sel/na

S. E. Luria